



# "Some Mohr Jottings"

by Bishop Greg Mohr

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## A Time of Sabbatical

As I reported earlier, Synod Council has granted me a 3-month sabbatical, beginning April 25. This will be followed by 4 weeks of holidays. I return to Synod Office at the end of August. I am excited about this opportunity and am very grateful to Synod Council for this gift of time.

There are two primary components for sabbatical. As the Sabbatical Guidelines document states: "A sabbatical provides not only opportunities for more in-depth learning and renewal but also rest from labour. A sabbatical should be holistic, in that it includes time for prayer, reflection, rest, and care of the body, as well as developing gifts for ministry." To that end, I have contracted with The Missional Network in order to participate in the Executive Leadership Training. Dr. Craig van Gelder will serve as consultant/coach with me in reviewing the 360 survey on Leadership. I then meet for a couple of days with Bishop Larry Kochendorfer and Dr. Alan Roxburgh to review and explore the role of bishop, identifying areas and means by which missional renewal may be lived out in my work and life. In addition to the Executive Leadership Training, I also recognize that there are key books central to the missional process that I must read, and so I will engage some of this literature during my time of sabbatical.

The other aspect of sabbatical is to enable reflection, rest, and care of the self. I will have no trouble in attending to this part of the sabbatical! I look forward to time away from the "mantle of the office," from the pressures and burdens of this position. I am grateful for the many expressions of well-wishes and the prayers for renewal and rest that so many of you have conveyed to me.

## Synod Management and Contact Information

During my absence, the Conference Deans will be the point of first contact for pastors and congregations. In addition, all e-mail sent to my account will be reviewed by the office secretary, who will attend to many of those e-mails, but who also will forward e-mails, as necessary, to the Officers, Deans and program committee chairs for their action. The Officers of the Synod will meet regularly over the coming months, and will be overseeing the ministry of the Synod.

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## CONTACT INFORMATION

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## Some Very Good News

Something significant has taken place that will have tremendous impact on our synod and its ministry. At its February 2015 meeting, the ELCIC Advisory Board for the CECF (Church Extension and Capital Fund) passed a motion allocating \$200,000 to each synod over two years “in support of Canadian mission initiatives to participate in God’s mission in our changing context.”

This motion arose out of a workshop facilitated by Dr. Craig van Gelder, who led the CECF Advisory Board in a process of understanding technical and adaptive change. The Board had been given a mandate by National Church Council to review the current fund cap (\$14 million) of the CECF and to examine the criteria by which grants are provided to each synod from the excess funds generated each year by the CECF.

Through their work on adaptive challenges, the CECF Advisory Board considered implications for the CECF policy. As Rev. Eric Krushel, BC Synod member of the Advisory Board stated, “We came to understand that the most appropriate and effective way we could explore this challenge was to work with synods in exploring what it means to participate in God’s mission today.”

And so they listened, reflected, discussed, and took seriously this mandate to review the CECF policy. In the end, they re-framed how a significant portion of the funds could be used in an entirely different way. They passed a motion authorizing the distribution of \$100,000 per year per synod for 2015 and for 2016.

The funds are to be used in specific ways, namely:

*Funds will be used for activities that are experimental in spirit and genuinely seek to explore what it means to participate in God's mission in the world today. They may involve working through congregations, areas, ministries and/or new initiatives and in partnership with other synods and organizations emerging from ecumenical, interfaith, or community relationships.*

*They may include such elements as:*

- 1. Gatherings, meetings and/or conversations that foster discernment of God's mission in our contexts.*
- 2. Leadership development facilitating the formation, education and/or preparation of leaders for addressing the challenges of discerning how to participate in God's mission in our changing context.*
- 3. Staffing to achieve discerned mission goals. For example, contracts for consulting services, project development, organizing and/or presentations.*
- 4. Funding to rent or purchase equipment or space in support of experiments.*

*On an annual basis, synods will report to the CECF Advisory Board through their synod mission consultant. This report will include financial accounting of how funds have been used. It will also include reflection on what is being learned and discovered about how to participate in God's mission in our changing context.*

*Funds not used by June 30, 2018 are to be returned to the ELCIC National Initiatives fund.*

*When appropriate, synods are asked to be diligent in inviting members of other synods to participate in events that might be relevant to others. Synods are encouraged to be diligent and enthusiastic in communicating the stories of experiments through various media including blogs. The CECF board is committed to using what is learned in an ongoing review of the CECF funding cap and criteria.*

Synod Council deliberated for quite some time about this good news when it gathered for meetings on April 9 to 11, 2015. First of all, Synod Council affirmed that the missional renewal process remains a key priority for the synod. Secondly, it recognized that the time and energy the Missional Renewal Task Force members have put into the missional renewal process is immense. But the Task Force members are being stretched thin, trying to attend to all that needs to be undertaken. They are spending extensive hours on this process because they are committed to seeing the missional process implemented and take hold within our Synod. But in many respects, this process requires further resources (human and financial) for it to move ahead.

To that end, Synod Council approved a 5-point strategy to undergird the missional renewal process in our synod, based upon the parameters set before us by the CECF Advisory Board when it provided the funding. The funds are to be allocated in the following ways:

1. To hire a part-time Assistant to the Bishop for Missional Renewal. (The provision for appointing one or more Assistants was made by the Synod in Convention in May 2014.)
2. To continue contracting with The Missional Network.

3. To provide honoraria as needed for additional resource people.
4. To provide travel and accommodation reimbursements for participants in the clergy cohorts and congregational guiding teams.
5. To use the remaining funds for such things as synod-implementation initiatives and experiments, workshops, and related equipment.

Discussions currently are on-going with respect to the position of the Assistant to the Bishop for Missional Renewal. In my absence, the Officers of the Synod will continue these negotiations and, at the appropriate time, will issue a press release informing you of the appointment. We are excited at what this gift from our national church will assist us in doing here in our BC Synod.

### **IMPORTANT SYNOD DATES FOR 2015 and 2016**

#### **Conference Conventions:**

**Peace River and Northwest joint convention**  
May 29-30, St. Paul's, Prince Rupert

**Lower Fraser Valley and Greater Vancouver joint convention**  
Saturday, September 19, Location TBD

**Southern Interior**  
Sept 25-26, Church of St. Paul Shared Ministry, Barriere

**Vancouver Island**  
Oct 2-3, Grace, Victoria

#### **Synod Council Meetings:**

Oct 29-31, 2015  
Feb 25-26, 2016

#### **2016 BC Synod Convention**

April 28 to May 1, 2016, Coquitlam  
Featuring a Synod Learning Event on Thursday, April 28, with guest presenter and facilitator Rev. Dr. Craig van Gelder